

WAT, by my modir seint Venus,
And by hir fader Saturnus,
That hir engendrid by his lyf,
But not upon his weddid wyf!
Yet wol I more unto you swere,
To make this thing the seurere;

Now by that feith, and that leautee
I owe to alle my brethren free,
Of which ther nis wight under heven
That can her fadris names neven,
So dyvers and so many ther be
That with my modir have be privee!
Yit wolde I swere, for sikirnesse,
The pole of helle to my witnesse,
Now drinke I not this yeer clarree,
If that I lye, or forsworn be!
(for of the goddes the usage is,
That whoso him forswereth amis,
Shal that yeer drinke no clarree).

NOW have I sworn ynough, pardee;
If I forswere me, than am I lorn,
But I wol never be forsworn.
Sith Richesse hath me failed here,
She shal abyge that trespas dere,
At leeste wey, but she hir arme
With swerd, or sparth, or gisarme.
For certes, sith she loveth not me,
fro thilke tyme that she may see
The castel and the tour toshake,
In sory tyme she shal awake.
If I may grype a riche man,
I shal so pulle him, if I can,
That he shal, in a fewe stoundes,
Lese alle his markes and his poundes.
I shal him make his pens outslinge,
But if they in his gerner springe;
Our maydens shal eek plukke him so,
That him shal neden fetheres mo,
And make him selle his lond to spende,
But he the bet cunne him defende.

MORE men han maad hir lord of me;
Although they not so mighty be,
That they may fede me in delyt,
I wol not have hem in despyt.
No good man hateth hem, as I gesse,
for chinche and feloun is Richesse,
That so can chase hem and dispyse,
And hem defoule in sondry wyse.
They loven ful bet, so God me spede,
Than doth the riche, chinchy grede,
And been, in good feith, more stable
And trewer, and more serviable;
And therfore it suffysith me
Hir goode herte, and hir leautee.
They han on me set al hir thought,
And therfore I forgete hem nought.
I wolde hem bringe in greet noblesse,
If that I were God of Richesse,
As I am God of Love, sothly,
Such routhe upon hir pleynt have I.

THEREFORE I must his socour be,
That peyneth him to serven me,
For if he deyde for love of this,

Than semeth in me no love ther is.

IR, seide they, sooth is, every del,
That ye reherce, and we wot wel
Thilk oth to holde is resonable;
for it is good and covenable;
That ye on riche men han sworn,
for, sir, this wot we wel biforn;

If riche men doon you homage,
That is as foolles doon outrage;
But ye shul not forsworn be,
Ne let therfore to drinke clarree,
Or piment maked fresh and newe,
Ladies shulle hem such pepir brewen,
If that they falle into hir laas,
That they for wo mowe seyn Alas!
Ladies shuln ever so curteis be,
That they shal quyte your oth al free.
Ne seketh never other vicaire,
for they shal speke with hem so faire
That ye shal holde you payed ful wel,
Though ye you medle never a del.
Lat ladies worche with hir thinges,
They shal hem telle so fele tydinges,
And move hem eke so many requestis
By flattery, that not honest is,
And therto yewe hem such thankinges,
What with kissing, and with talkinges,
That certes, if they trowed be,
Shal never leve hem lond ne fee
That it nil as the moeble fare,
Of which they first delivered are.
Now may ye telle us al your wille,
And we your hestes shal fulfille.

WAT fals/Semblant dar not, for drede
Of you, sir, medle him of this dede,
for he seith that ye been his fo;
He not, if ye wol worche him wo.

Wherfore we pray you alle, beausire,
That ye forgive him now your ire,
And that he may dwelle, as your man,
With Abstinence, his dere lemman;
This our accord and our wil now.

WAT fals/Semblant, seide Love, I graunte
it you;
I wol wel holde him for my
man;
Now lat him come: and he forth
ran.

FALS/SEMBLANT, quod Love, in this
wyse

I take thee here to my servyse,
That thou our freendis helpe alway,
And hindre hem neithir night ne day,
But do thy might hem to releve,
And eek our enemies that thou greve.
Thyn be this might, I graunt it thee,
My king of harlotes shalt thou be;
We wol that thou have such honour.
Certeyn, thou art a fals traitour,
And eek a thief; sith thou were born,
A thousand tyme thou art forsworn.
But, natheles, in our hering,
To putte our folk out of douting,

I bid thee teche hem, wostow how?
By somme general signe now,
In what place thou shalt founden be,
If that men had mistere of thee;
And how men shal thee best espye,
For thee to knowe is greet maistrye;
Tel in what place is thyn haunting.

FALS/SEMBLANT.

IR, I have fele dyvers woning,
That I kepe not rehersed be,
So that ye wolde respyten me.
For if that I telle you the sothe,
I may have harm and shame bothe.
If that my felowes wisten it,
My tales shulden me be quit;
For certeyn, they wolde hate me,
If ever I knewe hir cruelte;
For they wolde overal holde hem stille
Of trouthe that is ageyn hir wille;
Suche tales hepen they not here.
I might eftsoone bye it ful dere,
If I seide of hem any thing,
That ought displeaseth to hir hering.

For what word that hem prikke or byteth,
In that word noon of hem delyteth,
Al were it gospel, the evangyle,
That wolde reprove hem of hir gyle,
for they are cruel and hauteyn.
And this thing wot I wel, certeyn,
If I speke ought to peire hir loos,
Your court shal not so wel be cloos,
That they ne shal wite it atte last.
Of good men am I nought agast,
for they wol taken on hem nothing,
That they knowe al my mening;
But he that wol it on him take,
He wol himself suspicious make,
That he his lyf let covertly,
In Gyle and in Ipocrisy,
That me engendred and yaf fostring.

THEY made a ful good engendring,
Quod Love, for whoso soothly
telle,
They engendred the devel of helle!
But nedely, howsoever it be,
Quod Love, I wol and charge thee,

To telle anon thy woning/ places,
Hering ech wight that in this place is;
And what lyf that thou livest also,
Hyde it no lenger now; wherto?
Thou most discover al thy wurching,
How thou servest, and of what thing,
Though that thou shuldest for thy soth/sawe
Ben al tobeten and todrawe;
And yit art thou not wont, pardee.
But natheles, though thou beten be,
Thou shalt not be the first, that so
hath for soth/sawe suffred wo.

FALS/SEMBLANT.

IR, sith that it may lyken you,
Though that I shulde be slayn right now,
I shal don your comaundement,
for therto have I gret talent.

WITHOUTEN wordes mo, right
than
fals/Semblant his sermon
bigan,
And seide hem thus in
audience:

BAROONS, tak hede of my sentence!
That wight that list to have knowing
Of fals/Semblant, ful of flatering,
He must in worldly folk him seke,
And, certes, in the cloistres eke;
I wone nowhere but in hem tweye;
But not lyk even, sooth to seye;
Shortly, I wol herberwe me
There I hope best to hulstred be;
And certeynly, sikereest hyding
Is undirneith humblest clothing.

RELIGIOUS folk been ful covert;
Seculer folk ben more appert.
But natheles, I wol not blame
Religious folk, ne hem diffame
In what habit that ever they go:
Religioun humble, and trewe also,
Alol I not blame, ne dispyse,
But I nil love it, in no wyse.

I mene of fals religious,
That stoute ben, and malicious;
That wolen in an abit go,
And setten not hir herte therto.

RELIGIOUS folk ben al pitous;
Thou shalt not seen oon dispitous.
They loven no pryde, ne no stryf,
But humbly they wol lede hir lyf;
With swich folk wol I never be.
And if I dwelle, I feyne me
I may wel in her abit go;

But me were lever my nekke atwo,
Than lete a purpose that I take,
What covenaut that ever I make.
I dwelle with hem that proude be,
And fulle of wyles and subtelte;
That worship of this world coveyten,
And grete nedes cumme espleyten;
And goon and gadren greet pitaunces,
And purchase hem the acquyntaunces
Of men that mighty lyf may leden;
And feyne hem pore, and hemself feden
With gode morcels delicious,
And drinken good wyn precious,
And preche us povert and distresse,
And fissen hemself greet richesse
With wyly nettis that they caste:
It wol come foul out at the laste.
They ben fro clene religioun went;
They make the world an argument
That hath a foul conclusioun.
I have a robe of religioun,
Than am I al religious;
This argument is al roignous;
It is not worth a croked brere;
Habit ne maketh monk ne frere,
But clene lyf and devocioun
Maketh gode men of religioun.